USDA NRCS
United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Plant Fact Sheet

ALSIKE CLOVER

Trifolium hybridum L.

Plant Symbol = TRHY

Contributed by: USDA NRCS Plant Materials Program

USDA NRCS National Plant Materials Center
Beltsville, MD

Alternate Names
Trifolium elegans Savi

Uses
Alsike clover is used for hay, pasture, and soil improvement, and is preferred where wetter or acid soils are encountered. It is generally out produced by other clover species for particular uses. Note: alsike clover can be toxic to horses under some conditions.

Status
Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description
Alsike clover has smooth stems and leaves, reaching a height of 2-4 feet. This introduced plant tends to recline or lodge unless companion plants hold the stem upright. The flowers are pink to white, and are borne along the length of the stem. The flower heads are much smaller than red clover, and the stems do not terminate in a flower as they do in red clover.

Adaptation and Distribution
Alsike is best adapted to the cool climate of the Northeast. It will tolerate wetter soils better than other clovers, and also acid conditions. It prefers silty clay loams, and does not tolerate droughty sites.

Alsike clover is distributed throughout the United States. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Website.

Establishment
Alsike clover is always seeded with grass, or can be overseeded into grass in the spring. For conventional plantings, spring and fall seedings will work. Alsike seed should always be inoculated due to the infrequent use of the species. Plant alsike at 2-4 pounds per acre, at a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch. Pre-plant fertilize according to soil test.

Management
Pasture management varies depending upon the forages in use, but should be based upon the grasses involved since they are the "meat and potatoes" of the mix. High rates of nitrogen fertilizer will damage the alsike component. In hayfields, cutting below 2 inches will damage the stand.

Animal management note: on pasture high in alsike clover content, take steps to introduce animals gradually to the forage or risk of bloat can be high. Horses have done poorly on pastures that have significant alsike components.

Pests and Potential Problems
Unknown.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)
Common seed is available from commercial seed sources.

Prepared By & Species Coordinator:
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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site<http://plants.usda.gov> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>

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